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30 June 1989

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NR Record

Iraq: Baghdad's International Exhibition for Military Production 49

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The exhibition, held from 28 April to 2 May, was an ambitious project that reflected the desire of President Saddam Husayn to expand Iraq's arms industry. The fair sought to display Iraq's military prowess and send a not-so-subtle message to Iran and other regional foes.

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Iraq: Baghdad's International Exhibition for Military Production

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Baghdad's recent International Exhibition for Military Production was an ambitious—and ultimately successful—project that reflected the desire of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn to expand Iraq's arms industry. The fair, which was held between 28 April and 2 May provided new insights on Iraq's arms industry as well as unprecedented exposure to its products. In addition to enhancing Iraqi prestige, the exhibition sought to display Iraq's military prowess and to send a not-so-subtle warning to Iran and other regional foes.

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Background

Baghdad developed plans to modernize and expand its arms industry during the economic boom of the late 1970s but could not sustain them during the war. In the past decade, Iraq managed to become relatively self-sufficient only in the production of some small arms, ammunition, and military explosives, while establishing a limited capability to manufacture some spare parts and electronic equipment and to repair large ground forces equipment such as armored vehicles and artillery. Shortages of foreign exchange, wartime export control regulations and embargoes by exporters of industrial technology, and the demands of the war on Iraqi manpower combined to stall Iraq's other plans to build major production facilities for tanks, missiles, and trainer aircraft. Instead, the Iraqis apparently concentrated on making minor modifications to weapons already in their inventory and on building prototypes of new weapons based on components taken from available weapons. In the case of the Condor II missile program, Baghdad's difficulties probably prompted it to cooperate with Egypt and Argentina to develop the missile outside Iraq.

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The success of Iraq's crash program to modify Scud missiles to strike Tehran and some easing of financial pressures and increased availability of technicially skilled manpower following the end of the war apparently have encourged Baghdad to resume its interrupted plans for expanding its arms industry and develop new ones. The Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization (MIMI), which was formed from the Ministry of Industry and Minerals in early 1988, is responsible for all aspects of military production. MIMI is led by Saddam's cousin and son-in-law Husayn Kamil al-Majid, whose appointment as minister probably is owed as much to his role as director of the successful chemical weapons and missile modification programs as to his relation to Saddam. Al-Majid is already using his managerial skills, political support, and events such as the military fair to push for additional investment and foreign participation in the arms industry, in our judgment.

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MIMI is managing numerous projects and negotiations with foreign firms that involve technology transfers and the construction and equipping of coproduction plants, research facilities, and support infrastructure (for example, roads, bridges, and hydroelectric power dams). Moreover, al-Majid is pushing efforts to develop a civilian industrial base to support the military facilities. According to press reports Iraq earlier this year awarded a contract to an Italian firm to build a steel plant, and is seeking offers on an aluminum smelter and specialty steel plant as well.[1] During the military fair, Majid announced an ambitious two-year program to develop sufficient industries to cover all of the armed forces' needs for weapons and equipment. He expressed hope that the experience gained and the resources derived from military industrialization would eventually be used to support civilian production. This statement, in our judgment, reveals that MIMI's projects probably will receive the highest priority for funding in Iraq over the next several years.

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[1] Before signing this contract, Iraq had considered purchasing an idle USX steel plant in Texas as a short-term solution to its shortage of locally produced steel. (U)

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Husayn Kamil al-Majid

Husayn Kamil al-Majid
Minister of Industry and Military Industrialization (U)

Husayn Kamil al-Majid is the most powerful man in Iraq's government after President Saddam Husayn, in our judgment. Both son-in-law and paternal cousin to Saddam, he has risen from humble beginnings as a security official to direct Saddam's personal security organization. As Minister of Industry and Military Industrialization, al-Majid heads Iraq's campaign to develop nuclear, biological, chemical, and conventional weapons technologies—programs Saddam deems most important for the security of the country and the postwar rejuvenation of Iraqi industry.

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We believe Saddam is grooming al-Majid for greater responsibilities by further including him in the government's day-to-day operations. Al-Majid attends key leadership meetings, even though he is not a high ranking member of the Bath Party, and was constantly seen at Saddam's side following Iraq's major battlefield victories last year. In April al-Majid publicly announced the purchase of 50 Mirage 2000 fighter aircraft from France, a responsibility usually given to the Minister of Defense. Although he holds the rank of major-general, al-Majid has no formal military training. We believe the death of Defense Minister Khayrallah on 5 May will lead to additional defense-related responsibilities for al-Majid.

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Born in 1955, al-Majid has a reputation for single-mindedness and completing assigned tasks on schedule. Al-Majid married the President's eldest daughter, Raghad, in 1983.

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The Exhibition for Military Production

We believe MIMI hosted the Baghdad International Exhibition for Military Production to boost the image of Iraq's defense industries and highlight the vital role that the military-industrial complex will play in postwar Iraq. The ministry also probably hoped the fair would attract the interest of a large number of foreign defense industries with the likely intention of using potential business opportunities to tie transfers of defense technology to any future Iraqi arms purchases.

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The exhibition was an ambitious and successful first effort that featured more than 200 companies from 28 countries. France had the largest contingent of exhibitors with 34, with the United Kingdom not far behind. Despite the large foreign presence, the burgeoning Iraqi arms industry was clearly the centerpiece of the exhibition and star of the show. (U)

An amazing array of Iraqi weapons systems—everything from small arms to 900-kilometer-range missiles—were displayed. The Iraqis claimed that they were either producing or capable of producing most of the systems on displaying. In fact, most of the operational weapons sytems exhibited were foreign designed and produced and had only earned the "Iraqi" label by being assembled or modified in Iraq. The only completely indigenous Iraqi weapons shown were small arms, light artillery, boats, and munitions. The majority of the more sophisticated indigenous Iraqi weapons systems were prototypes and/or

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mockups that had probably not yet left the initial research stage. Despite MIMI's attempts to oversell Iraqi industrial capabilities, the exhibition demonstrated the proven Iraqi ability to adapt and modify weapons systems to meet the unique and specific requirements of the Iraqi military.

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Highlights of the Exhibition

Modified Aircraft. The major surprise at the fair's airshow was a Soviet-made, Iraqi Air Force MiG-23 BN Flogger H fighter-bomber modified with a probable Mirage F1 type aerial refueling probe.

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the Iraqis claim that they have modified 15 such Floggers that can be fully refueled from Mirage F1s with a centerline fuel tank or Il-76 Candid transports with a drogue refueling assembly.

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Another major surprise was the unveiling of the Baghdad 1, an Il-76 MD jet transport modified into an airborne early-warning (AEW) aircraft and another example of Iraqi efforts to modify and combine several operational systems into a new weapons system platform. The Iraqis claim that they have modified an Iraqi-assembled, French-designed 2106 Tiger G radar and placed it into a radome under the aft section of the fuselage. The Iraqis also claimed that this aircraft was operational during the last four months of the war and was used to provide early warning to Iraqi aircraft. Information is passed from the Baghdad 1 to ground stations by voice communications and data-link, according to the Iraqis. The Baghdad 1 is also said to have a limited ELINT and COMINT capability. It does not have the capability to direct and control aircraft such as the US E-3 Sentry AWACS. In our judgment, the Baghdad 1 is still in an early testing stage.

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Main Battle Tanks. The Iraqis displayed a large amount of armor and artillery at the exhibition, reflecting the important role these weapons systems play in the Iraqi Army. Iraq unveiled its *Asad Babel* (Lion of Babylon) main battle tank, but the only Iraqi item on the Lion of Babylon was a brass lion welded to the glacis plate at the front of the tank. In fact, the Lion of Babylon was a standard Soviet-designed T-72M1 medium tank probably made in Gdansk, Poland. The tanks are shipped with the main gun tube detached and assembled upon arrival in Iraq. One intresting Iraqi claim was that the Lion of Babylon had been modified with a jammer for anti-tank guided missiles,

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The Iraqis displayed several older generation T-55 medium tanks that had been upgraded with a new main gun and armor or had been modified for special use. One of the tanks had its standard 100-mm main gun replaced with a 125-mm main gun, a laser range-finder and an autoloader. Another T-55 had add-on armor that consisted of 12-inch blocks of armor in a steel framework welded to within 18 inches from the turret, front, and sides of the tank.

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A third T-55 had an indigenously produced mine-roller in front of the tracks.

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Artillery Systems. Two strikingly new self-propelled (SP) artillery guns/howitzers—one a 155-mm caliber and the other a 210-mm caliber—were unveiled. The guns were prototypes, and each utilized the same 6x6 wheeled, articulated chassis, the first such wheeled self-propelled guns in the Iraqi inventory. The Majnoon (155-mm) had an advertised range of 38.8 kilometers with a 45.5 kilogram round. The Al Fao (210-mm) had a claimed range of 57.34 kilometers with a 109.4 kilogram round. This caliber weapon is the first of its kind in the world. Press reporting indicates that it is possibly of French-origin and was designed to bypass export restrictions on the standard 203-mm caliber.

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One of the more impressive artillery systems on display was a modified four-barrelled 120-mm self-propelled mortar carrier. The system featured four smooth-bore 120-mm mortars mounted side-by-side on a hydraulic platform at the rear of an MTLB armored personnel carrier. This mortar system—with a range of 8,000 to 10,000 meters—will effectively provide a dedicated indirect fire support battery to platoon-size units.

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Military Exhibition Air Show

The highlight of the fair was a series of air shows at Baghdad Mutheana airfield. Over two dozen aircraft made flight demonstrations with the Soviet-produced Iraqi MiG-29 and French Mirage 2000 fighter-bombers headlining the airshow. Although the MiG-29 —pride of the Iraqi Air Force and flown by one of the best Iraqi pilots—got top billing, the Mirage 2000 and its French pilot stole the show. The MiG-29 performance was lackluster and probably unrehearsed. The Iraqi pilot flew no set routine and only performed basic maneuvers well within the limitations of the aircraft. In contrast, the Mirage 2000 was flown to the limit, performing aggressive air combat maneuvers and clearly outshining the MiG-29.

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Considering it was the first such effort, the Iraqi Air Force put on a good performance. The Iraqis stuck to the flight schedule with little delay and had only minor glitches. The Iraqis, however, had some difficult and tricky moments during the show. Performing aircraft violated safety regulations several times during flight demonstrations.

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No consideration was given to crowd control in the aircraft operations area. On more than one occasion, people had to quickly get out of the way of aircraft taxiing into the display area—and Iraqi pilots had been given little if any training in how to fly in an airshow.

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Multiple Rocket Launchers (MRL). Three Iraqi MRL systems were on display, the Ababel 100, the Ababel 50, and the Sejjil 30/40/60. The Ababel 100 was probably a prototype MRL with four launch tubes each firing a 400-mm rocket with a stated range of 100 kilometers. The Ababel 50 is an Iraqi copy of a Yugoslav 12-tube, 262-mm MRL with a range of 50 kilometers. The Iraqis claimed they were producing this MRL as well as the rockets with two different types of warheads—one a cluster round with 300 antiarmor/fragmentation bomblets and the second an antiarmor round that dispenses 30 antitank mines.

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The Sejjil 30/40/60 is the Iraqi copy of the Brazilian Astros II MRL—manufactured by Avibras—that has been in the Iraqi inventory for several years. The Avibras representative at the fair stated that Iraq was just beginning to produce the Sejjil MRL under license. The Iraqis claimed that they have three different rockets for the Sejjil MRL:

- Sejjil 60: 1 round MRL, 300-mm rocket, range of 20 to 60 kilometer, cluster warhead with 30 bomblets.
- Sejjil 40: 4 round MRL, 180-mm rockets, range of 15 to 35 kilometer, cluster warhead with 20 time-delay bomblets.
- Sejjil 30: 6 round MRL, 127-mm rockets, range of 9 to 30 kilometers, 21- kilogram high-explosive warhead.

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Missiles. Both the Al Husayn and Al Abbas extended-range Scud surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs) were on display. The only visible difference to the standard Scud missile was that the missile airframe had been lengthened on both missiles. A new SSM launcher—the Walleed-1—was on display. It reportedly was capable of firing both the Al Husayn and Al Abbas, and we believe it is probably used in the Iraqi missile testing program. A mockup of the Al Faw ATBM was on display, but it was not an operational missile, and the display was more for show than anything else. Two new missiles on display were the Fahd 300 and 500 single-stage, SSMs with a claimed range of 300 and 500 kilometers, respectively. These were probably prototypes of systems under development. The Iraqis also displayed a probable FROG-7 artillery rocket—the Layth—modified to carry a submunition warhead.

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Munitions. MIMI displayed a host of indigenously produced and modified munitions. These included 250-kilogram and 500-kilogram cluster bombs, infrared-guided bombs, fuel-air explosive bombs, air-droppable naval mines, and a host of general-purpose bombs up to an amazingly large 9,000 kilogram.

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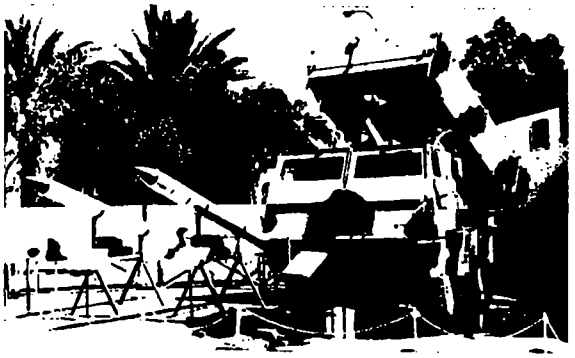
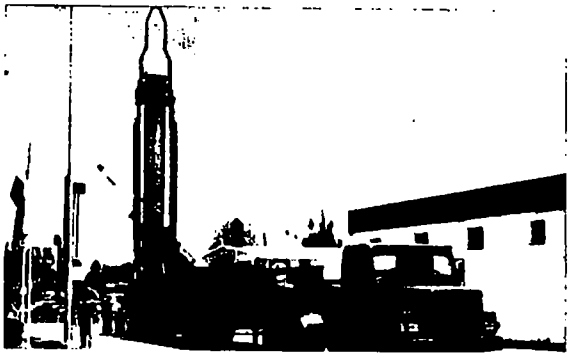
120-mm self-propelled mortar carrier

Ababel 50, 262-mm multiple rocket launcher



SEJJIL 30/40/60 multiple rocket launcher



WALEED-1 SSM launcher

Al Husayn missile components

Al FAW-1 ATBM mockup

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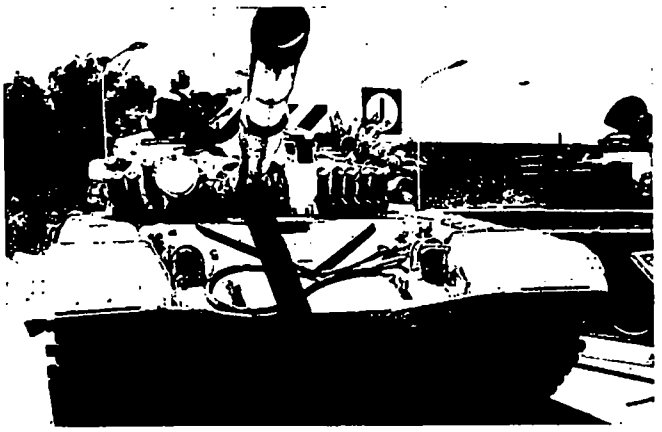
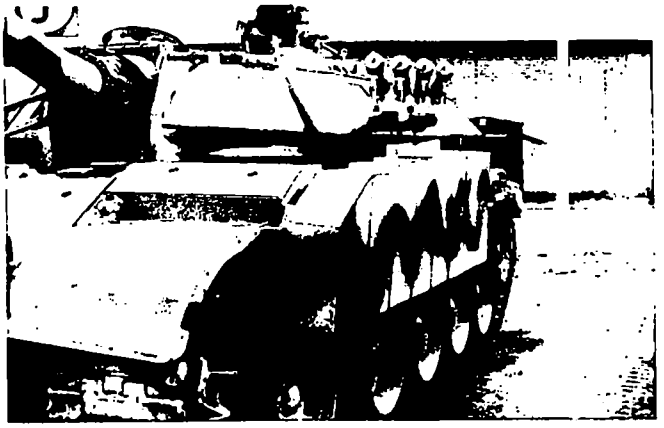


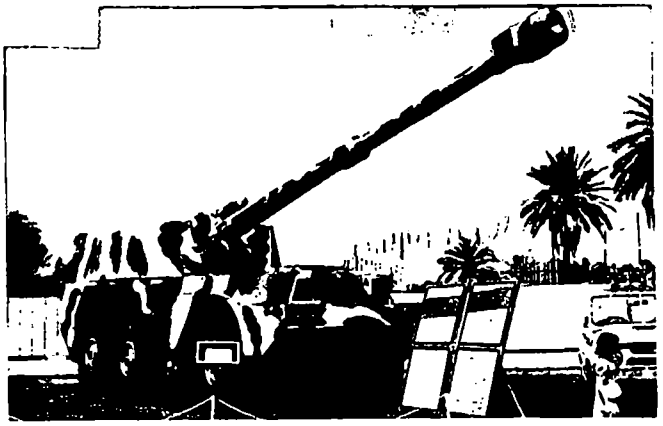
"Lion of Babylon" medium tank

Majnoon 155-mm self-propelled gun/howtizer



T-55 medium tank with add-on armor

Al Husayn (left) and Al Abbas (right) extended range Scud SSMs



Al Fao 210-mm self-propelled gun/howitzer

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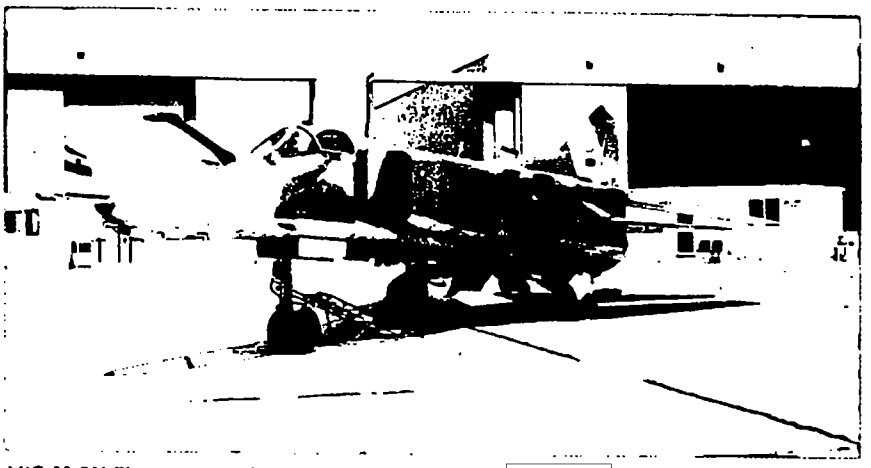

MiG-23 BN Flogger H modified with aerial refueling probe

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Leaping Into the Field

The weapon systems displayed in Baghdad shed new light on Iraqi capabilities and plans. We believe Iraq probably will continue to concentrate on modifications of major weapons systems until long-term plans to create the infrastructure necessary for large-scale assembly or production is in place. Iraq, however, probably will be able soon to begin producing for export in some areas—particularly munitions—where it has significant experience and technical skills.[2] Additionally, the electronic and other components displayed suggest that Baghdad will soon be ready to use them to support the planned coproduction facilities and possibly to bring in some export earnings.

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The military exhibition also suggests that Baghdad will not move in incremental stages in building its arms industries. Iraq will in some cases try to bypass the time-consuming development of technical skills and experience through licensed assembly or coproduction. We believe Iraq is likely to continue moving directly into independent or partially dependent research and development—including reverse engineering and modification—and small-scale production, particularly in areas such as missiles

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[2] Iraq apparently devoted considerable effort during the war to developing bombs and other antipersonnel weapons. most of the bombs displayed this year were also shown at a smaller fair in October 1988 and may be in production on a scale sufficient to support international sales.

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where licensed assembly or coproduction may not be readily available. Iraq's licensed assembly of systems like the Astros II multiple rocket launcher, its various prototype systems, and its announced plans for coproduction projects indicate that Baghdad is trying to initiate its military industrialization at several levels. We believe, however, that Iraq's all-out approach toward developing its still embryonic arms industries will involve many missteps and abandoned projects. (b)(3)

Conclusion

Iraq's growing arms industry will be increasingly important to Baghdad in the postwar period. In addition to the national pride the Iraqis obviously felt in the military exhibition's display of their production and engineering achievements, the arms industry fills an important role in larger national security goals:

- Stung by embargoes during the war, Saddam almost certainly intends to reduce Iraq's dependence on its major arms suppliers.
- Baghdad probably hopes that growing self-sufficency in arms production, particularly in the development of missiles and special weapons, will help it maintain its military advantage over Iran.
- The display of some prototypes, such as the mockup of the Al Faw 1 antiballistic missile, as well as some of the carefully crafted Iraqi statements touting the fair, probably were intended to warn Iran and Baghdad's other regional foes that Iraq's military prowess is increasing. Tehran acknowledged the Iraqi fair by accusing the West of trying to turn Iraq into a regional policeman.
- Baghdad's announcement that it will sell Iraqi-produced weapons to other Arab states as well as its provision of surplus war materiel to states such as Jordan, Chad, and Sudan indicate its intention to use its arms industries to further foreign policy aims. (b)(3)

We believe the military exhibition and Baghdad's announcement of its ambitious plans also indicate that Iraq hopes its efforts to develop an arms industry will provide other benefits. The Iraqis apparently believe that building the infrastructure and necessary industrial capacity for the arms industry will also aid the civilian economy. These programs also probably will ease some demands on Iraq's economy by absorbing some of the manpower that will become available with demobilization. Baghdad may also believe that the arms industry will eventually provide export earnings. (b)(3)

The Baghdad fair further demonstrated the growing importance of the Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization, in our judgment. the military exhibition was the full responsibility of al-Majid and his Ministry. (b)(1) (b)(3)

Al-Majid's high profile during the exhibition probably enabled him and the ministry to reap substantial benefits from the fair's success and will likely ensure that his military industrialization program continues to received a high priority for funding and political support. (b)(3)

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